



### Draft CCP/EIS Release Strategies

- Postage-paid Post Card sent to Monument Mailing List for return
- News Release/Public Service Announcement
  - Availability of Draft CCP/EIS
  - Length of Comment Period
- FWS Presentations As Requested
- Comments may be submitted via Monument website, U.S Mail



### Rattlesnake Hills Elk Management Summit



### Rattlesnake Hills Elk Herd Summary

- Herd is transient in nature
- Travels between:
  - Monument
  - Central Hanford
  - Wahluke Slope
  - Yakima Training Center
  - Adjacent Private/State/Federal Lands
- Herd size on ALE varies between seasons

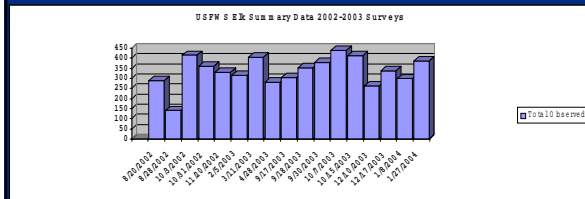


### Herd Size

- Extensive counts conducted over past 2 years
- Spring/Summer – Average 150 head
- Fall breeding season – Average 337 head
- Winter of 2003 – High count of 437
- ALE winter counts represent approximately 86% of total herd



## Inventory Summary



Aerial

Ground

## Herd Size

Year	Herd Size	Harvest	Trap/Relocate
1997	591	20	
1998	712	33	
1999	838	101	
2000	660	212	171
2001	550*	75	
2002	414	53	32
2003	500	79	

\*Approximate prediction from WDFW graph

## Herd Size

- Herd size is approximately 500 head
- Following spring calving the herd will be approximately 600 head



## Future Surveys

- Technical working group has actively been working on improving survey methodologies
  - Umatilla, Yakama and Nez Perce Tribes; DOE; WDFW; USFWS
- Joint survey protocol developed for Rattlesnake Hills Herd
- Implementation to begin in September 2004 jointly by USFWS and WDFW
- Information incorporated into WDFW state-wide population model

## ALE Today







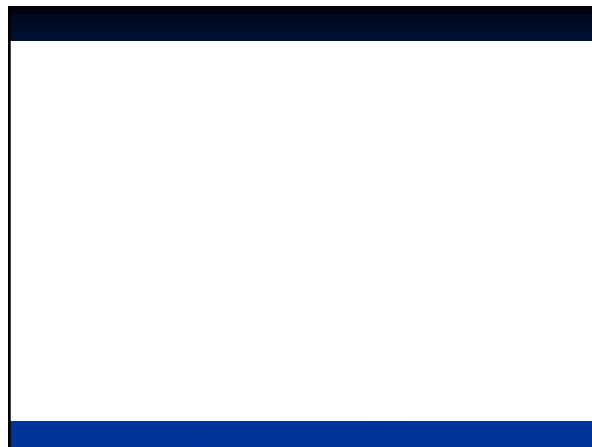
## Elk Summit Summary

- Elk Summit held in Prosser on April 5-6, 2004
- Many stakeholder groups attended
- Each stakeholder group made commitments to address the elk population issue



## USFWS Follow-up Actions

- Improved landowner communications
- Payment of ½ cost of hazing operations
- Law enforcement coordination
- Trap and Relocation
- Cost-share fall counts (Monitoring protocol implementation work with WDFW)
- Assist WDFW with information dissemination
- Full range of population control addressed in CCP



## Long-Term Herd Management

## Population Control

- Objective: Conduct population control/herd management actions on the Monument, as needed, based upon scientific resource management data.
- Used to reduce populations that:
  - Threaten shrub-steppe/riparian integrity
  - Threaten other wildlife populations
  - Human health and safety
  - Integrity of non-federal lands





## Population Control May Include:

- Trap and Relocate
  - Drive trapping
  - Live traps
  - Helicopter net gunning
- Government Cull
- Controlled Hunt
- Natural Predation
- Hazing
- Immuncontraception



## Short-Term Control Actions

- Cooperative Hazing Program with WDFW
- Completion of Emergency Action Categorical Exclusion for Population Control



## Hunting Considerations Within CCP

- Objective 7-12: Provide for high-quality hunting opportunities in accordance with WDFW regulations on Ringold, Wahluke and Saddle Mountain Units
- ALE Unit considered but rejected for recreational hunting through NEPA analysis

## ALE IS A RESEARCH NATURAL AREA

- Fish and Wildlife Service Management of Research Natural Areas (8 RM 10, 1983)
- "...activities on RNA's are limited to research, study, observation, monitoring, and educational activities that are non-destructive, no-manipulative, and maintain unmodified conditions. The objectives of RNA's are to:
  - Preserve adequate examples of all major ecosystem types or other outstanding physical or biological phenomena;
  - Provide research and educational opportunities for scientists and others in the observation, study and monitoring of the environment;
  - Preserve a full range of genetic and behavioral diversity for native plants and animals, including endangered or threatened species.
- RNA's must be reasonably protected from any influence that could alter or disrupt the characteristic phenomena for which the area was established.
- RNA Use:
  - (2) Picnicking, camping, collecting plants, gathering nuts and herbs, picking berries, hunting, fishing, trapping and other public uses which contribute to modification of the Research Natural Area should be discontinued or expressly prohibited if such uses threaten serious impairment of research or education values.

## Considered But Rejected Because:

- Highest and best use is research
  - Designated RNA in 1972
  - Designated National Environmental Research Park
  - Designated Important Bird Area
  - Current research underway:
    - Seismic / Gravitational / Atmospheric
    - Geological / Paleologic / Archaeological / Historical
    - Wildlife / Plant Community / Hydrology / MBC / Invasives
    - Fire Stabilization & Rehabilitation / Fire Effects
    - Contaminants / Environmental Monitoring For Hanford Site

## Considerations Continued

- Protection of rehabilitation efforts
- Protection of vulnerable infrastructure
  - Communications - EMS, Energy NW, DOE, others
  - Monitoring equipment
  - Research
- Protection of cultural resource sites
- Protection of other wildlife species

## Considerations Continued

- Public safety considerations
- Security
- Protection of fragile habitats